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CRITICAL NOTES

THE GOSPELS IN THE LATIN VULGATE

In recent studies of the Vulgate version,¹ the conviction has forced itself upon me that, so far from being the work of one translator, it represents several hands, some of them at least of much greater antiquity than has been supposed. Especially in the case of the gospels has it become apparent to me that more than one translator has wrought upon them. As I have recently had occasion to say elsewhere, it is therefore quite wrong to treat the Vulgate of the gospels as a harmonious work, and it is clear that the text-critical value of it is greatly enhanced, seeing that the translation goes back into a time when the gospels were not yet united into one collection.

To this argument serious objection has been made, on the ground that uniformity in translation was not sought or considered by ancient translators. As this is a question of no mean importance, I beg to lay before the readers of this *Journal* some considerations bearing upon its decision.

Laying quite aside a priori reasoning I appeal to the statistics. Take the *Concordance* of Moulton-Geden and so simple a verb as *ἀποκτεῖν*, “to kill.” It occurs in Matthew 12 times; in Mark, 10 times (not in 3:4; here the Vulgate read *ἀπολέσαι*, *perdere*); in Luke, 12 times; in John, 12 times. Now, this word is rendered *occidere* in Matthew, Mark, and Luke *everywhere*, in John *nowhere*; *interficere* in Matthew, Mark, and Luke *nowhere*, in John *everywhere*. Is this accidental? Or does it suggest that John was translated by a different hand from the Synoptists?

Take *ἀρχιερεύς*. It occurs in Matthew 25 times; in Mark, 21 times; in Luke, 15 times; in John, 21 times. It is rendered *pontifex* in Matthew, Mark and Luke but once, among 61 cases; in John *everywhere*, except in the first passage (7:32), where the Vulgate has *principes* and seems to have read *ἀρχοντες* instead of *ἀρχιερεύς*. Is this again accidental? Or does it prove diversity of translators? It is obvious that the translation of John is due to another hand than that of the rest.

But that also Matthew, Mark, and Luke were not translated by the same man is shown by the fact that in Matthew the regular translation of *ἀρχιερεύς* is *princeps sacerdotum*, and in Mark *summus sacerdos*. In

¹ *Novum Testamentum Latine*. Textum Vaticanum cum apparatu critico ex editionibus et libris manuscriptis collecto imprimendum curavit D. Eberhard Nestle. Stuttgart: Priv. Württ. Bibelanstalt, 190. xx9+657 pages; 5 maps. There is also a Greek-Latin edition.

Matthew there is not a single deviation from *princeps sacerdotum*; in Mark *summus sacerdos* appears 16 times (among 21), and is replaced by *pontifices* in 15:11, because the preceding verse ended in *summi sacerdotes* and it would have sounded very badly to go on again *summi sacerdotes*; in 14:35 by the simple *sacerdotes*, because *summus sacerdos* had occurred already in the same verse; by *princeps sacerdotum* in 2:26; 10:33; 11:18. But these are such exceptions as prove the rule.

Take a third example, *παρακαλεῖν*. It occurs in Matthew 9 times; in Mark, 9 times; in Luke, 7 times; in John, nowhere. It is rendered *rogare* in Matthew 6 times, *deprecati* nowhere; vice versa, *deprecati* in Mark, 7 times, *rogare* twice.

Further, *ἐπιτιμᾶν* occurs in Matthew 7 times; in Mark, 9 times; in Luke, 12 times; in John, nowhere. It is rendered *communari* in Matthew nowhere, in Mark 8 times—i.e., everywhere but once (8:32); in Matthew and Luke the *regular* translation is *increpare*; in the Old Latin codex *a* in Mark everywhere *obiurgare*. See on this word, as well as on *δοξάζω*, H. T. White's tabulated classifications in *Old-Latin Biblical Texts*, Vol. III, pp. xxiii ff. I think this again proves that Matthew and Mark are translated by different hands.

Anyone who would satisfy himself that Luke also is due to a different hand may carefully compare the history of the passion. In the Roman church, in Holy Week, this history is read first from Matthew, then from Mark, then from Luke. Following this rule, some years ago, I was struck by the observation that expressions which are quite identical in Greek are different in Latin. Take the one verse, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation;" Matthew 26:41, "ut non intretis in temptationem;" thus also Mark 14:38; but Luke 22:46, "ne intretis." To make sure of my conclusion, I took the *Concordance* almost at random, and found it fully corroborated. Jerome testifies himself, in the letter to Pope Damascus, that he changed as little as possible: "Quae ne multum a lectionis Latinae consuetudine discrepant, ita calamo temperavimus ut, his tantum quae sensum videbantur mutare correctis, reliqua manere pateremur ut fuerant."

The importance which the gospels of the Vulgate gain, when they are no longer considered the work of Jerome in the fourth century, but in the main the product of the second—perhaps the early part of the second—will justify my wish to win for my observation and conclusion, which appear to be new, a thorough examination, and if possible acceptance.

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